

*Directorate for
Children and Young People*

Children Missing Education Policy and procedures

*Attendance & Pupil Support Service
Education Safeguarding Team
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Background

Children Missing Education in Kirklees is one of the statutory functions carried out by the Education Safeguarding Team which is situated within the Attendance & Pupil Support Service.

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 imposes a legal duty on all local authorities to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, Children Missing Education (CME) and get them back into education.

1. In September 2016, the DfE issued revised statutory guidance (to local authorities) on CME:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

2. Revised guidance (to schools and local authorities) on attendance has also been issued (in October 2014).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

3. From June 2013, Ofsted has been implementing a new joint inspection for multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children which will include CME's. In November 2013, Ofsted published a report called "*Pupils missing out on education*":

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141124154759/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupils-missing-out-education>

4. From September 2016 there have been amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") which have been incorporated into the amended CME guidance September 2016 in order to improve communication and co-ordination between schools (including independent schools) and LAs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/identifying-children-who-are-missing-education>

The key points are as follows:

1. From Revised DfE guidance on CME – September 2016

- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time (suitable) education;
- Local authorities should have robust procedures and policies in place to enable them to meet their duty;
- The duty applies to children who are not registered at a school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (i.e. elective home education);
- The duty only relates to children of compulsory school age;
- Children who are on a school roll, but not attending (regularly), should be followed up by the school in the first instance, and/or referred to the local authority for further action;
- Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils.
- Local authorities should undertake regular reviews and evaluate their processes to ensure that these continue to be fit for purpose.

2. From Revised DfE guidance on Attendance – October 2014 (in relation to CME)

- A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admissions register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The local authority should be notified in advance of a deletion from school roll, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

3. From Ofsted report “Pupils missing out on education” – November 2013

Although the report is primarily about children and young people who do not, or cannot attend full-time school education in the usual way, the report recommends that each local authority should:

- Ensure that every child is on the roll of a school, regardless of circumstances, unless parents have elected to educate their child at home.

4. From the “Identifying children who are missing education” amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006-September 2016

- Under the proposals set out, schools (including independent schools) will be required to:
 - inform their LA when they are about to delete a pupil’s name from the admission register under all fifteen grounds;

- record details of the pupil's residence, the name of the person with whom they will reside, the date from which they will reside there, and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information);
 - inform their LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school; and
 - provide information to their LA when registering new pupils within five days, including the pupil's address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).
- The proposals will also give LAs the discretion to require the same information on children leaving or joining the school at standard transition points, which occur when a child of compulsory school age begins school at the start of the first year or leaves at the end of the final year of that school.
 - In addition, there are two other proposed amendments relating to sections 8(1)(f)(iii) and 8(1)(h)(iii) of the Regulations which will require 'reasonable enquiries' to identify a pupil's whereabouts to be performed collaboratively between the school and LA where there is continuous absence after a grant of leave.

Related guidance and procedures

This policy & procedure document should be read alongside other related documents which, together, aim to ensure that all Kirklees children who are missing from education are identified:

- Kirklees Elective Home Education information for parents July 2016, which covers arrangements for children in Kirklees that are educated at home.
- Kirklees leave of Absence- Guidance for Schools January 2015
- Additional supportive guidance can be found through the amended keeping Children safe in Education document:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf

Children Missing Education – Procedures in Kirklees

The work of the Kirklees CME team is broadly organised around “Leavers” and “Arrivals”.

Procedures for CME “Leavers”

Leavers are children who are/were on the roll of a Kirklees school but have gone missing. These are followed up by a member of the Service. Our objective for Leavers is:

To ensure all leavers from Kirklees schools enrol elsewhere as soon as possible, or are tracked to another local authority.

- At the heart of procedures for CME leavers is the requirement of all schools in Kirklees to inform the CME team of these children (by completing a word document referral and uploading this through AnyComms to The Attendance & Pupil Support Service) in line with local guidance. An e-mail is sent to the referrer confirming receipt of the referral.
- All referrals are entered onto a database, then checked against Carefirst (the Children & Social Care system) to ensure those most at risk are prioritised. Referrals are also checked against council tax records, local health services, Stronger Families/APSO involvement. In many cases, the Home office is contacted regarding Asylum Seeker families and the local University if children have parents who were international students. If deemed necessary, the Kirklees Hazard Warning database is checked. The Benefits investigation team are contacted if appropriate and on occasion contact through the Kirklees Facebook page has taken place. Where other siblings are identified which have not been referred to the CME team, the school(s) is contacted and reminded of the importance of following CME procedures.
- The CME team then “tracks” the child into another Kirklees school or to another local authority. The Team also advises the referring school regarding removal from roll.
- Progress on all leavers is reviewed on a weekly basis by Senior Practitioners of the Educational Safeguarding Team. Reports identify all open referrals, how long they have been open, and whether there are welfare concerns.
- In addition, the CME team check the “Lost Pupil Database” on a regular basis for any children that have been uploaded and not downloaded, but not referred by the school. The school is contacted and reminded of the need to follow guidance.

- At the end of each half term, those children who have been closed to CME as “extended leave/leave of absence” or those who have been closed as “unable to locate” are checked against relevant databases to discover if they have returned to Kirklees or enrolled at a school elsewhere.
- The CME team has supported colleagues in the health services through cross referencing, regular checks & investigations regarding ghost patients.
- CME are striving to forge good working relationships with both independent schools and Grammar Schools within Kirklees (as well as other schools on the border of Kirklees) with the aim of highlighting CME’s work and to encourage information sharing when children from these schools go missing. This is all the more important with the introduction of the amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Procedures for CME “Arrivals”

Arrivals are children who are found to be living in Kirklees but are not on the roll of a school or being educated otherwise. The CME Team are made aware of these children from various teams and services such as Health Services, Homeless Services, other authority CME teams, G4S, Social Care, Pupil Admissions and Schools. The CME Team also receive requests of support from parents new to either Kirklees or the Country who are in need of support for their children. These are followed up by practitioners who work closely with relevant Services. Stronger Families values are followed to look at the child’s broader needs and may involve other services/agencies through the Single Assessment process. Our objective for Arrivals is:

To ensure all pupils living in Kirklees without a school place are identified and followed into education as soon as possible.

- At the heart of procedures for CME arrivals is awareness by all schools, professionals and agencies in Kirklees to notify the CME team of any children they come across that are not on the roll of a school. Schools and agencies are expected to inform the CME Team of any child identified by completing a word document referral and forwarding this in a secure way. An e-mail is sent to the referrer confirming receipt of the referral.
- All referrals are entered onto a database, then checked against Carefirst (the Children & Social Care system) to ensure those most at risk are prioritised. Referrals are also checked against council tax records, local health services, Stronger Families/APSO involvement. In many cases, the Home office is contacted regarding Asylum Seeker families. Investigations are also conducted into discovering other siblings who are in need of education and support. If deemed necessary, the Kirklees Hazard Warning database is checked.

- Identified children are allocated to practitioners based on priority. The practitioner visits the family home to meet and assess educational and other needs, supports the family through the admissions process where necessary, and works with other agencies to meet the identified needs of the child/family. This is to support a smooth transition back to school and education (sometimes into education for the first time).
- Priority is given to ensuring the child is enrolled at school or other suitable provision (possibly through the Fair Access procedures or Single Point Referral) as soon as possible.
- Progress on all arrivals is reviewed on a weekly basis by Senior Practitioners of the Educational Safeguarding Team. Reports identify all open referrals, how long they have been open, and whether there are welfare concerns.
- In addition, the Pupil Placement Meeting takes place regularly. A Senior practitioner for the team meets with colleagues from Pupil Admissions and from the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) to identify children, discuss, and agree actions on complex cases.
- Attendance & Pupil Support Service representatives have attended and will strive to continue to attend the regular CSE meetings with other professionals to share concerns, plans and strategies. Children identified to be at possible risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or forced marriage are reported to the relevant agencies and services as soon as they are identified in order to Safeguard.
- The CME team is also mindful and vigilant to the possibility of trafficked children or families regardless of whether the trafficking be for the purposes of sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced labour, domestic servitude etc. If identified, this information is shared with relevant agencies and services as soon as identified in order to Safeguard. The soft intelligence form is also used when suspicions arise.
- The Educational Safeguarding Team also shares information when requested by those colleagues within Attendance & Pupil Support Service who attend the MARAC meetings.
- Regular property checks come from the compass officer group on Sharepoint (regarding Asylum Seekers). They are investigated & checked by The Education Safeguarding Team whilst working alongside Pupil Admissions to look at school place availability. The Service then gives advice on whether the property is recommended for families.
- Other statutory duties carried out by the Education Safeguarding Team consist of issuing Penalty Notices to parents on behalf of Schools in regards to failing to ensure regular attendance at school. Chaperone licences are processed and issued from this Service as well as Child Employment responsibilities and the processing and issuing of employment licences for children.

School Attendance Orders

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

In Kirklees, the Attendance & Pupil Support Service (CME Team) is responsible for the issuing of School Attendance Orders and any subsequent prosecution.

Other specific vulnerable groups worked with.

Exploited children

Through investigations, the CME team on occasion discover that children have gone missing or have been discovered missing in Kirklees due to being exploited in some way. The CME team are aware of the issues around trafficked children, children who may be sexually exploited, those children who may have been forced into marriage, those children who may have been victim to FGM or those vulnerable to becoming radicalised (Prevent agenda). A Senior practitioner of the Educational Safeguarding Team is a member of the Chanel Panel operating within Kirklees.

Elective Home Education

The responsibility for Elective Home Education within Kirklees was transferred to the Attendance & Pupil Support Service in September 2015, therefore parents who move into Kirklees wishing to electively home educate their children are initially offered a visit by an Education Safeguarding Team practitioner in line with the local authority's procedures. The initial visit provides the opportunity to collect any relevant information and views about how parents wish to provide for their child within the context of home education. The Attendance & Pupil Support Service also has the responsibility to initially offer a visit to those families who remove their children from school in order to Electively Home Educate.

Asylum seekers and refugees

The CME team has a great deal of experience working with asylum seekers, refugees and those families with leave to remain in the UK. Support in ensuring children access education and signposting to other support services is paramount.

Traveller Families

The CME team works closely with other Kirklees professionals to identify families from the Traveller community that are new to the area. Support is offered to those families to identify appropriate educational provision for their children. The CME team also has a representative who sits on the Northern Co-ordinators Group, which meets to discuss best practice and how best to support those of the travelling community.

International new arrivals & E.U migrant families.

Many families have moved to England and chosen Kirklees as the place to raise their families. CME assist those families who require support to obtain educational provision and access other appropriate support.

Refuges

CME work alongside local refuges and has good working relationships with services such as KABWWA to support vulnerable children back into education.

Huddersfield University

On occasion, the CME Team have worked alongside the International Student Team to identify students who have completed studies, returned to home country and taken their children with them.

Failed appeals / incomplete admissions

The CME team works closely with Kirklees Pupil Admissions. Through the Pupil Placement meetings, the CME team is informed of any unsuccessful appeals for a place in a preferred school and any children who have not been allocated a place at the preferred school, where parents have not logged an appeal nor applied elsewhere. The CME team works with those parents by providing support, information, advice and guidance to ensure their child is enrolled in a school.

Non Compulsory school age children.

The Kirklees CME Team have a statutory duty to work with children of compulsory school age, but if there have been concerns raised regarding the whereabouts of children not yet of compulsory school age, CME would investigate, track, trace and ensure education provision is offered. This ensures the smooth transition of the child into education. The CME team has issued guidance specifically in relation to early years children

“Rising fives”

The CME team has worked in partnership with Pupil Admissions, the KIAS Service and Early Years Partners during Spring and Summer in order to identify children entitled to a reception place in the following September, but where parents have not submitted a primary application (PCAF) for a Kirklees school.

Transient, nomadic families

The CME team investigate the whereabouts of these families when they move unexpectedly and inform other relevant agencies in the area when the family are located to provide support.

Contact.

The Attendance & Pupil Support Service (The Education Safeguarding Team) in relation to Children Missing Education can be contacted on 01484 221919.

Referral forms can be obtained through contacting the Service direct.

